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New York

President:	Mr. Rodríguez Giavarini	(Argentina)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnal and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones

00-28697 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Egypt, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa and Uruguay, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Wensley (Australia), Mr. Vantsevich (Belarus), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Takasu (Japan), Mr. Powles (New Zealand), Mr. Monteiro (Portugal), Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore), Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa) and Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, and to Mrs. Sylvie Junod, head of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now call on the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General (*spoke in Spanish*): I am especially pleased to welcome the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic on his first visit to the United Nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Argentina for the invaluable and constant support it has given to the Organization. I would particularly like to express my deep appreciation for the important contributions it has made to peacekeeping operations throughout the world. Today's initiative illustrates the fact that Argentina continues to be as committed as ever to supporting our work in the world's most dangerous regions.

(spoke in English)

I want to thank you, Mr. President, and your country for bringing us together to discuss a vital issue that is often overlooked: the protection of United Nations and associated personnel. There could be no finer way to use your presidency than to focus attention on those brave men and women who risk their lives bringing peace to the world and relief to the victims of conflict. It is not just United Nations personnel, but the international community as a whole that stands to benefit from this initiative and from the stronger sense of urgency that I hope it will generate. For whenever a Blue Helmet, a relief worker or a local interpreter falls victim to hatred and violence, their families, friends and colleagues are not alone in mourning their loss. It is felt also by those who depend on their help: sick and hungry children, refugees and displaced persons and civilians threatened by armed conflicts.

We are faced with a dramatic increase in the number of killings, assaults and kidnappings of United Nations staff since the early 1990s; and I might add that our colleagues from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and our non-governmental-organization partners in the field have suffered in equal measure. We cannot just wring our hands and go on with our business. Nor do we have the option of simply walking away from dangerous situations. Often the United Nations has to stay because it represents the last ray of hope for suffering populations. If we leave, there may be no one else to take our place. We cannot, therefore, let threats intimidate us, and we cannot let violence drive us out. We have too great a responsibility towards the people we promised to help.

But this in no way reduces our responsibility towards those who deliver that help in high-risk environments. The least we can do is to make sure that they are not exposed to unnecessary danger. Let me, at this point, clarify one very important point. When I speak of United Nations personnel, I mean not only military and police staff, but also the thousands of civilians who serve in peacekeeping, peacemaking and humanitarian missions; and not only international staff, but also the locally recruited men and women without whom we simply could not fulfil the mandates that the Member States give us. Our responsibility extends to them all.

I am grateful to the President for inviting Ms. Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), and the representative of the ICRC, to join us today. They are very well placed to brief the Council on the special difficulties encountered by humanitarian workers in the hostile environments where they now most often serve.

When I say "we" are responsible, that includes us in the Secretariat, and it also includes you, the Member States. The people who venture into peril are our colleagues, but they are also your citizens. We in the Secretariat firmly believe there is much we ourselves can do to better safeguard the security of our United Nations colleagues. In recent months I have held consultations with the major United Nations operational agencies working in conflict situations, and we are considering a number of concrete steps to improve our security procedure.

The first is to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) to perform its responsibilities as overall security manager of the United Nations system. This is not, by any standard, a small task. To do a good job, UNSECOORD needs to be able not only to carry out security assessment missions, training and investigations. It should also be able, for instance, to send short-term security personnel to the field in crisis situations or provide stress counselling. It should also have at its disposal adequate computer programmes to enhance its management capacity. To meet all these requirements, we need a larger team with adequate resources, headed by an experienced individual able to make the tough decisions the job entails.

That is why we welcomed the recent resolution in which the General Assembly recognized the need to strengthen the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the need for a full-time Security Coordinator. I am pleased to inform the Council that the Secretary-General intends to act on this resolution by appointing a full-time Security Coordinator as soon as possible.

A second goal is to ensure that field missions are adequately staffed with security professionals and adequately provided with essential equipment, such as radios, satellite telephones, flak jackets and so on. An urgent review has been initiated to establish the exact requirements, country by country.

A third and essential objective is to place much greater emphasis on security training. Troops normally receive extensive security training; a constant awareness of potential danger is instilled in them. But many non-military staff — police officers, relief workers, human rights observers and others — serve in conditions that are just as difficult. They must become as security-conscious as their military colleagues and be thoroughly prepared to cope with the dangers they may face.

One way this could be done could be to establish training centres where all international staff, whatever the mandate they are to fulfil, would receive intensive security training before being deployed. Member States may also wish to consider inviting non-military staff to attend the security segment of their training programmes for peacekeepers. Your country, Sir, has an excellent programme in this respect and, during a recent training session for United Nations volunteers, a one-day orientation was organized for them by your Government.

Another good example has been that of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). A pre-deployment base of operations was established outside the immediate mission area, in Darwin, Australia, to train security and other staff before deployment to East Timor.

Finally, we want to ensure much better coordination of security arrangements among the many United Nations actors often present in one location, as well as with other humanitarian organizations which might be present. Better coordination has been a key part of our reform efforts in other areas. In this case, it could literally be a question of life or death. Available information should be shared more widely and more systemically; clear procedures should be in place and respected; and security equipment should be pooled when feasible.

To achieve all this, the Secretariat needs the support of the Member States on several levels.

First of all, we need all to recognize that good security costs money. Personnel costs money. Equipment costs money. Resources have to be sufficient and they have to be predictable. At present, they are not. The financing of security management and training remains piecemeal — with funds coming from a great many different sources — and, I am afraid it say, it also remains inadequate. One innovation we have introduced this year is that most Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals launched for 2000 include requests from humanitarian agencies to cover country-specific security requirements. I sincerely hope these appeals will be heard.

Another source of financing has been the Trust Fund for Security of personnel of the United Nations, established in the summer of 1998. Unfortunately, the level of contributions so far has been frankly disappointing. Contributions received amount to a little more than $1.2 million. This has not even allowed us to provide training for those assigned to the 20 most precarious countries and regions. I take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Finland, Japan, Monaco, Norway and Senegal for their contributions to the Fund so far and I appeal to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the security of personnel by contributing as generously as they can.

As I have said, resources for security must not only be increased; they must also be more predictable. In the longer run, we must move away from the ad hoc approach we have been taking. There should be nothing discretionary about financing staff security. It is a core responsibility of Member States and budgetary arrangements should reflect this. Together, we must start exploring ways in which this could be achieved.

But there is much more Member States can do. Let me suggest a series of concrete actions they could take directly.

First, those who have not yet done so can sign and ratify the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, which finally entered into force last year, but as yet has only 29 States parties. Sadly, this is the exact same number I quoted when I addressed the General Assembly on the same subject four months ago.

Secondly, the Convention currently covers United Nations and associated personnel providing support to a United Nations operation authorized by the Security Council or the General Assembly. Member States may wish to consider extending its scope to cover categories of personnel who at present fall outside the Convention's protection regime.

Thirdly, Member States should take steps to speed up ratification of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which defines intentional attacks on personnel involved in humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations as war crimes.

And fourthly, Member States should assist in investigating and bringing to justice those who have harmed or murdered people serving the United Nations and, indeed, other organizations working to foster peace or bring relief in conflict areas. Since January 1992, 184 staff members have lost their lives in the service of the United Nations. Of these, 98 were murdered. And yet, to date, only two perpetrators have been brought to justice and convicted. What does this tell the world? That it is all right to kill United Nations personnel? That those who do so are guaranteed impunity? I trust not. But that is, in effect, the impression we will give until Governments take the necessary measures to end impunity.

For example, this Council has recently received reports identifying those allegedly responsible for the shooting down of two United Nations planes in Angola in December 1998 and January 1999, in which a total of 23 people were killed. In this case, as in the many others still unresolved, it is my sincere hope that Member States will do all they can to ensure that a serious investigation is completed and that the culprits are brought to justice. This Council itself has a special responsibility to see that justice is done when our colleagues are the victims of deliberate acts of violence, and it has a crucial role to play in other respects, too.

The mandates given to United Nations operations have an enormous impact upon the security of our personnel in the field. That is why I urge Council members to bear in mind two issues when they formulate those mandates. First, the size and configuration of the force must be commensurate with the risk it is likely to face. If it is not, the parties will be tempted to test its will, which will in turn endanger the lives of our personnel. Secondly, mandates should not create unrealistic expectations among the local population. Too often, United Nations personnel become the targets of desperate people's anger and frustrations when it turns out they cannot fulfil those expectations.

I believe I have clearly expressed my conviction that we must change the way we think about the security of United Nations personnel. Security is not a luxury. It is not a perk. It is not a favour to be granted. Security is something we owe the troops and civilians who volunteer to serve in faraway places under the most challenging of circumstances and to the local staff who help us fulfil our mandates. Security is also indispensable to the success of our work and that of the other organizations that collaborate with us in the field. It is, in a word, part and parcel of any peacekeeping, humanitarian or other mission we undertake anywhere in the world. We must stop acting as if it were anything less than that.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I warmly thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement, and I would also like to thank her for her kind words regarding the Government of Argentina's support for the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The next speaker is Ms. Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Bertini: I thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Security Council for this invitation to address the Council, on behalf of the United Nations agencies, on what is the most important issue facing us today.

In more and more crises, the United Nations flag has become a target rather than a shield, and all too often aid workers must risk their lives to save the lives of others. It is hard for us sometimes to appreciate what a humanitarian worker goes through on a daily basis. For instance, in Somalia, the Sudan and Afghanistan, United Nations relief convoys have been hijacked and our drivers have been beaten or killed. In Angola and Afghanistan, our planes have been fired on. Members of our staff have been held hostage in Sierra Leone, the Balkans, the Great Lakes, the Caucasus and elsewhere.

Since 1992, as the Deputy Secretary-General noted, United Nations agencies have lost 184 civilian staff to violence, including air crashes. Since 1994, there have been 59 incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking that have affected 228 of our colleagues. In 1999, there were 292 violent robberies, assaults, rapes and vehicle hijackings.

One recent victim, Saskia van Meijenfeldt, a dedicated young Dutch woman who worked for the World Food Programme (WFP), will always stand out in my mind. I think of her often. She and her colleague Luis Zúñiga were shot in the head at point blank range after an ambush in Burundi. Mr. Zúñiga was the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) chief of staff in Burundi. Their deaths were all the more horrible because they were execution-style, premeditated and cold — deliberate acts of violence aimed at the United Nations itself.

Those providing food, shelter and medicine — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, WFP, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and our many non-governmental organization partners often become victims in humanitarian crises. According to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have each lost 25 staff members since 1992; UNICEF and WFP have lost 27 each; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has lost 30 civilian staff. When you add deaths in vehicle accidents caused by work in difficult terrain and the deaths of short-term contract employees, the figures climb even higher.

The mechanical business of delivering aid in war zones is especially hazardous. The World Food Programme, for instance, often handles the logistics of moving both people and supplies for all of the United Nations agencies and many non-governmental organizations in spots such as East Timor, Kosovo and Angola. One of the saddest moments for all of us last year was when a WFP-chartered shuttle from Rome to Pristina crashed, killing all 24 people on board.

A growing factor in the security picture has been the resurgence of the use of hunger as a weapon of war. People are wilfully starved because of their politics, their religion, their ethnicity or just because of where they live. Food stocks are stolen or destroyed, fields are burned. Hunger is an integral part of the tactics of violence in Somalia, the southern Sudan, Angola and Afghanistan. It was also used in Kosovo in a systematic way not seen in Europe for half a century. The tactic does not vary that much whether it is used in northern Afghanistan or northern Uganda. Delivering the food aid crucial to responding to humanitarian needs has put workers in harm's way. Sometimes warring factions see the delivery of food aid itself as a political act, and therefore those who deliver it are targets.

Of course this is unacceptable. The international community must take concrete steps to ensure that the safety of our aid workers it totally protected and that we put a stop to this alarming trend. If humanitarian agencies are to carry out our primary task of assisting civilians, humanitarian workers have to be given better tools to ensure their protection.

I am honoured to follow the Deputy Secretary-General in making these remarks. She has wisely made the issue of staff security one of the top priorities for her and for all of us. Staff security has also become my highest personal concern at WFP. In 1998 — a year in which WFP lost 12 of its staff members, seven of them murdered — we created a security task force to examine ways to better protect our people. Our greatest achievement so far has been an agency-wide security training programme for every employee. In 11 months we have trained more than 5,400 people, and, over the last two-year period, we have quadrupled our expenditures for staff security.

I know that this is a high-priority issue for all of my colleagues who are agency heads, particularly those who are managing humanitarian agencies where staff are at risk on a daily basis.

We believe we must equip all humanitarian staff for dangerous work through security training, to include how to read the warning signs in volatile settings, how to deal with armed marauders, how to spot hidden landmines, how to extricate themselves from trouble and how to deal with forced confinement.

But in-house training by the United Nations agencies, although extremely important, is not enough. We have to improve our communications systems, our field structures, our equipment, our security consciousness. And we must have the cooperation of Governments in the countries where we work in providing better protection, in allowing the United Nations staff to use communications systems and in pursuing and prosecuting those responsible for violence against United Nations staff.

There needs to be a shared recognition that the job of humanitarian worker is now, more than ever, a dangerous job. Soldiers — who may spend only a small part of their time in dangerous, life-threatening situations — are instilled with an awareness of security and are given security training. Humanitarian workers, on the other hand, who may spend most of their time in equally high-risk environments, are not taught to be aware of risks; and it is time we were. So we have to increase the awareness of security issues in the United Nations culture and embrace security management as an integral part of every operation.

I commend you, Mr. President, and the Security Council for your willingness to address the issue of security for humanitarian workers. Humanitarian agencies are facing some very difficult questions these days. The most difficult of all is, when is the security risk for our staff so great that we cannot reach the victims of war — who then die for lack of food, shelter, water and medicine? Where do we draw the line?

I also commend the Council for its increased interest, attention and action regarding humanitarian issues in the last several months, which were highlighted last month by the focus on Africa. I believe I speak for all of my colleagues when I urge the Security Council to always take the safety of humanitarian aid workers into consideration when it takes political decisions.

Humanitarian operations frequently contribute to the fulfilment of the Council's mandate for peace and security. Its efforts to focus attention on the security of United Nations staff will strengthen the clear role of the United Nations as a leader in humanitarian action worldwide. We need to confront the simple fact that the United Nations sends unarmed aid workers into environments where Member Governments will not send armed troops.

A number of recommendations have been made to strengthen the consciousness and the competence of the United Nations approach to security, and I would like to highlight just a few for your consideration.

First, the humanitarian principles of impartiality must be maintained in all crises. They should be taken into account even when the Security Council takes decisions on conflict situations. The humanitarian principles of impartiality must be accepted, and the terms of engagement must allow aid workers to reach innocent civilians, wherever they are, on either side of a conflict. This has been a problem in many cases, but we must reaffirm, for instance, that no innocent child or adult should starve because he or she is caught in a war or a conflict.

Secondly, I would respectfully request that the Security Council consider examining its authorization of peacekeepers in crisis situations. The Council regularly spells out the peacekeepers' role in protecting civilians,

but it does not necessarily clarify their role in protecting aid workers. I would recommend that the Council explicitly include consideration of and define how future peacekeeping operations would protect humanitarian workers as well.

Thirdly, we must also mobilize the international community to punish those responsible for crimes against humanitarian workers — a message that I underlined following the Deputy Secretary-General's comments. Strong messages must be sent to those Governments and groups under whose jurisdiction murders, kidnappings and harassment take place that they will be held accountable and punished if they fail to respect aid workers' lives. In the case of countries that do not take serious action to prevent or to investigate and prosecute crimes against humanitarian workers, I suggest that the Council consider calling for a system to monitor such violations, leading to penalties.

I must tell you, Mr. President and members, that this is one of the most frustrating parts of our jobs, because so often when staff members are murdered, we have no way to follow up to ensure that people are held accountable. All too often, we hear things like "It wasn't our troops who were responsible; it was the rebels", or the other way around. Therefore, no one takes responsibility for the investigation. Sound investigative reports are rare. And, as the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned, in two — only two — of the murders have people been prosecuted and brought to justice.

Fourthly, security training must be conducted for all United Nations staff members who work in insecure environments. This should be a pre-condition for staff to participate in high-risk operations.

Fifthly, again to underline the Deputy Secretary-General's words, we should enhance UNSECOORD's role as coordinator and clearing house for security information by increasing its staff and its funding. We all welcome the decision to appoint a full-time security coordinator. The United Nations budget should be revised, of course, to accommodate this. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that UNSECOORD currently has 12 staff members for its worldwide operations. Eight of them are paid for from budgets of other agencies, so that the United Nations is funding four people to manage the security operations for tens of thousands of United Nations staff members all around the world. In fact, when you look at the budget, it calls for about a half a million dollars a year, not counting the malicious acts insurance, to pay for all of what the United Nations provides for staff security, in addition, of course, to their agency contributions and agency budgets. And, of course, the suggestions that the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned are very important in strengthening this operation.

Finally, as humanitarian aid workers, we all want to work under a United Nations flag that is a symbol of hope and of safety. We do not want to abandon the poor people we are helping when insecurity makes the job dangerous. We want to be there to provide food, shelter, medicine and hope.

Every day, this is what United Nations staff members do throughout the world. They give everything they have to save people living in the worst circumstances on earth. They shouldn't have to give their lives.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Bertini for her statement and for her kind words.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, please allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for personally presiding over this meeting despite your very busy schedule. I would also like to thank the delegation of Argentina for its efforts in arranging this meeting. We are very pleased that the Deputy Secretary-General is here with us at today's meeting; she has made a very important statement. I would also like to thank Ms. Bertini from the World Food Programme (WFP) for her statement.

At present, armed conflicts still exist in many areas of the world, not only endangering the peace and stability of those areas but also causing great damage and harm to the civilians there. Over the past several decades, the United Nations and related international organizations have done much work towards promoting the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts and providing assistance to the civilians caught in conflict, and they have achieved certain results. However, what is very disturbing to us is that the personal security of more and more United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel is not duly protected. This has already had a negative impact on the performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

The Chinese delegation supports the efforts made by international security personnel to maintain peace and stability in the areas concerned, as well as to provide necessary humanitarian assistance to the civilians who are

victims of these armed conflicts. We condemn attacks of any form against the United Nations and associated personnel, and humanitarian personnel. We request that the countries concerned take timely and effective measures to bring the perpetrators of these atrocities to justice.

However, it is very regrettable that some people who have already been proved to have committed such atrocities are still free and at large without being punished under the law. We urge the Governments concerned and the parties to the conflicts to abide by international humanitarian law and human rights law and to actively cooperate with the United Nations and related international organizations in their endeavours to protect the security of United Nations and associated personnel, and humanitarian personnel.

Like many countries, China believes that the mandate of each and every United Nations peacekeeping operation should be clear, appropriate and feasible and should include an extensive plan for security beforehand. At the same time, the Member States and the United Nations Secretariat should maintain close cooperation on this question. Similarly, we believe that such personnel, in performing their duties, should abide by international law and by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and should abide by and respect the laws of the host countries.

The presidential statement that we are going to adopt has fairly comprehensively reflected the positions of parties. Therefore, we are in favour of this statement.

At the same time, we also believe that the United Nations must establish effective mechanisms and adopt highly effective measures to address such problems, rather than merely issuing statements. The facts have shown that limiting ourselves to issuing statements is ineffective in solving problems of any kind. We must follow up our statements in order to show that the United Nations will never tolerate such atrocities.

The question of the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel involves security, peacekeeping, legal, humanitarian and other issues. It should therefore be jointly discussed and managed by a variety of United Nations bodies. We believe that today's debate will help further enhance the importance that other United Nations organs attach to this question, and we hope that the Security Council will be able to shoulder its Charter responsibility and strengthen its coordination and cooperation with other United Nations organs so that this matter may be jointly handled in a satisfactory manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I wish first of all, Sir, to welcome you most warmly to the presidency of the Security Council. Your presence here for today's special debate on the protection of United Nations and other personnel indicates Argentina's commitment to protecting those who keep the peace and who bring humanitarian assistance to conflict zones. Your delegation and mine work together in close cooperation, and we shall pursue that cooperation to attain our common goals.

Let me express my delegation's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having called for this debate. The protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, including locally engaged staff, is a priority concern for Canada. Since the Council last discussed this matter as a cross-cutting issue, incidences of injury, harassment, rape or murder directed at field staff have continued to escalate. In the last few weeks alone, the Council has been advised of numerous incidents where our people have found themselves under threat in Angola, Colombia, Somalia, Sudan and Kosovo. These actions are quite simply unacceptable.

It is perhaps not surprising, however, that as civilians increasingly become targets in contemporary conflicts, those providing protection and assistance to them are also likely to find themselves under attack. Their activities, often undertaken in extremely dangerous environments, are often seen by combatants as biased or as an obstacle to a given military goal, or are even exploited as the means to an end. The problem is exacerbated by the increasing prevalence of splinter groups and irregular forces lacking clear chains of command and having limited knowledge of international law and principles. In such conditions, working under a United Nations flag or a Red Cross or Red Crescent symbol is no longer a guarantee of protection.

(*spoke in English*)

That staff of the United Nations and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations continue to operate in such insecure environments is a

testament to their dedication to affected populations. We pay tribute today to their courage and sacrifices, knowing how much more vulnerable populations would suffer without their commitment. But our solidarity with these staff members, whether expatriate or locally engaged staff, must extend beyond words, as noted yet again — and again so eloquently — this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General.

The international community must find ways to ensure respect for and implementation of applicable international law by all parties concerned. In this regard, we would note the vital role of the Security Council, in particular, in seeking to put an end to impunity. We must also find creative ways to ensure respect and freedom of movement for such staff in the field, including by encouraging the negotiation of ground rules and codes of conduct with and among combatants and host Governments. Finally, we must ensure that the work of United Nations and humanitarian personnel is not used as a substitute by Member States for addressing the root causes of conflicts.

The responsibility for the safety of United Nations and associated personnel and of humanitarian workers lies first and foremost with the parties to a conflict and with host Governments. They should be called on to guarantee the security of these individuals, including through the negotiation of special arrangements, and to ensure that civilian populations have unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Where no such guarantees are offered, international censure should be swift. The inclusion of attacks on United Nations and relief personnel as a war crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court is an important contribution to the body of international legal protection, as is the entry into force of the 1994 United Nations Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

It is essential that Governments adopt the appropriate domestic legislative, judicial and administrative measures to ensure that those who commit such crimes are brought to justice. It is indeed astounding, as Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini have stressed this morning, how few perpetrators of acts against United Nations personnel have been apprehended and prosecuted. Such impunity must not be allowed to persist, as it only further undermines field staff security.

The Security Council has increasingly recognized its own role and responsibility in strengthening the safety and security of those we send into harm's way. In resolutions and in presidential statements, we have increasingly called for ever more precise measures, and have included specific provisions in peacekeeping mandates. This proactive trend can and should be reinforced and made more systematic. We believe that the Council should be prepared to use all measures at its disposal to reinforce its concerns in this regard, including the adoption of targeted sanctions in instances where parties to a conflict have failed to render the proper guarantees. Indeed, the international community must raise the political and economic costs of attacks against such personnel. My delegation is anxious to translate into action the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians, and we look forward to cooperating with other Council members to achieve that goal.

As the civilian component of peacekeeping and peace support missions gains greater currency, and as civilians are sent into immediate post-conflict situations, safety will be an ever more pressing issue. The Council has now recognized this problem and has responded by regularly giving complex missions a robust mandate to protect people. We are left, of course, with the challenge of ensuring that missions are given adequate resources to acquit such mandates. Ultimately, Council members must show genuine will in giving peacekeeping missions the tools and the resources they require to do the job, and the capacity and the mandate which will allow them to work in relative security.

Troop contributors have a role to play as well, in ensuring that their personnel are sufficiently trained to understand the complexities of the area of operations and its people so as to avoid needless misapprehension and hostility. In particular, we need to ensure adequate training for non-traditional civilian peacekeepers, such as municipal administrators, who currently receive little or none.

Relief workers can also take measures to reduce their own vulnerability, and Canada recognizes that humanitarian organizations are currently enhancing pre-mission training and reviewing security procedures in order to tackle this problem, although increased funding in this area, too, is very much required. Country-specific briefings should be made available for field staff and attention should be paid to negotiation skills. Neutrality and impartiality in the delivery of assistance must be maintained, and coordination and collaboration among different agencies entrenched.

The particular vulnerability of locally engaged staff bears special mention. In this regard, when the General Assembly adopted the human rights defenders Declaration in 1998, we renewed our commitment to protecting those who work in their own countries to protect and promote human rights and humanitarian principles. In extremely dangerous circumstances, when expatriates are evacuated, locally engaged staff are often left to maintain operations.

Canada also welcomes the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in including provisions for security within the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals for 2000. We look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, which, we understand, will include a detailed analysis and recommendations addressing the scope of legal protection under the 1994 Convention. We hope that it will also identify practical measures that can be adopted to reduce the vulnerability of personnel.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to say what a great honour it is to participate in this debate presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina. I should also like to thank Argentina for taking the initiative to convene a meeting on such an important subject — the protection of United Nations personnel in conflict zones — which, unfortunately, is all too topical. The countries of the European Union have participated greatly in United Nations operations, whether of a peacekeeping or humanitarian nature. The countries members of the European Union have given much, endured much and, sometimes, suffered greatly. It is therefore right that on such a serious issue the European Union should speak through the voice of its President: the representative of the country that currently holds the Presidency of the European Union, Portugal, will speak later. I should simply like to state that France fully associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Portugal. For that reason, I will confine myself to making a few brief comments in my national capacity.

United Nations personnel who are taking part in operations, whether peacekeeping or essentially humanitarian in nature, are involved in a dangerous occupation. Such staff are often personally prepared to take the risks involved. But the Security Council must bear the responsibility for ensuring, as far as possible, the security of the personnel whom it sends on missions in the framework of United Nations operations. It is also the responsibility of the Council — which is to say, those of us around this table — to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel, agency personnel and all those who participate in or contribute, from near or far, to any operation that the Security Council decides to undertake. We have that responsibility.

We have two avenues for action: the mandate of operations and the provision of the means for such operations. I shall refer first of all to the mandate.

The lessons learned from past experience have not been in vain. The Council is paying increasing attention to the mandate and the rules of engagement of United Nations operations, and I should like to stress the importance of that aspect of our procedure: keeping a close watch over drawing up the rules of engagement. We must ensure that such mandates and rules of engagement make it possible to protect effectively the security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel.

I said that there has been some progress. The provisions included in the resolutions establishing the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone illustrate this trend and the progress that has been made. This is a good development, but it is not enough. I believe that we must take very serious note of the proposals made this morning by Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini, which deserve to be borne in mind when we draft mandates for complex peacekeeping or humanitarian operations. I believe that the observations of Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini will be a very useful guide for our deliberations. Such are my views on mandates.

Turning to the means, we must effectively secure a good fit between the mandate and the means. Peacekeeping personnel must have available to them not only the legal means to protect themselves in discharging their mandate, but also the necessary human and material resources. Guaranteeing the security of such personnel means that we must ensure that staffing levels are adequate, which entails a cost. As Ms. Fréchette pointed out, security has its cost. If we are serious today in expressing our concern for the security of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, we must, in each case, draw practical conclusions in terms of numbers, staffing levels and financial contributions. We cannot evade that clear requirement.

Those are my brief comments. I should simply like to add, in my national capacity, that we are happy to announce that France is currently completing the process of ratifying the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

I was also pleased to hear about the forthcoming ratification of the Convention.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I should like to welcome you, Sir, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, as you preside over today's meeting of the Security Council. I should also like to wish you every success as head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, a country with which Russia enjoys traditional bonds of friendship. We are also grateful to the delegation of Argentina for taking the initiative to convene the Council to consider this very important set of issues relating to the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones.

Ensuring the security of such personnel has become an integral part of all Security Council resolutions dealing with peacekeeping operations. The Council has repeatedly addressed this issue specifically, as it is doing today, and yet there are serious reasons why it should once again examine this important problem thoroughly and draw the necessary practical conclusions. The United Nations is usually called upon to deploy its operations in situations that represent a real danger for the personnel involved in them, and we note with great alarm that, during the course of their work, United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel are with increasing frequency becoming the victims of terrorist acts, murder, abduction, kidnapping and hostage-taking. We need only look at what happened recently in such hot spots as Kosovo, Sierra Leone and East Timor.

In all these operations, there were incidents of violence against peacekeepers and the staff of international organizations. The degree of danger to which they are exposed in what would appear to be the most innocuous circumstances — that is, as they carry out purely humanitarian tasks — is borne out by the recent attack on peacekeepers who were accompanying children on their way to school. This occurred in Kaminica, in Kosovo. Similarly, there was the attempt by Albanian extremists to storm the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo headquarters in Mitrovica, also in Kosovo, and the fire set to the office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the Albanian part of that same city. All these events attest to the need for urgent measures to be taken for the practical defence of international personnel.

In sharing the general concern over the problem of safety of international personnel, we are not speaking only on the basis of hearsay. Russia, from its own, direct experience has come to grips with the tragic consequences of this problem. Russia is actively involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and it also bears the brunt of the peacekeeping burden in the settlement of numerous conflicts in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This activity is carried out in cooperation with the United Nations in strict compliance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, and it is confirmed by relevant Security Council resolutions. The CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan are made up almost entirely of Russian troops. About 1,700 Russian soldiers are deployed in the zone of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the achievement of a stable ceasefire and the prevention of large-scale fighting in both these regions were achieved by Russia at a very high price. In the years of the operation of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia, Georgia, over 70 of our servicemen have died and over 200 have been injured as a result of armed provocation or terrorist acts.

As has already been mentioned today by my colleagues, the Security Council has repeatedly pointed out that it is the responsibility of the States and the parties involved in a conflict to ensure the proper conditions for the work of international personnel and the punishment of those responsible for attacks against these personnel. We consider it appropriate and important for the Council to reaffirm this position.

There is an indisputable need for a solid legal basis for the protection of such personnel. We welcome the entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Government of Russia is taking the necessary steps to accede to this international instrument; the complete package of instruments necessary for Russia's ratification of the Convention is before the national Duma. A significant role in strengthening the legal basis for improving the security of international personnel is to be played by the resolution on the safety and security of

humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. At the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly we are expecting a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on this item.

Many practical proposals have already been made today on how to improve the security of these personnel, and, like Ambassador Dejammet, we consider it essential for all the specific proposals made by Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini to be considered most thoroughly. We also consider that one of the practical ways to improve the security of United Nations personnel could be to include anti-terrorism experts in the staff of the various missions. This is particularly important when United Nations and associated humanitarian operations are conducted in areas of heightened terrorist risk. Such experts could assume coordinating functions in the anti-terrorist effort, within the general and overall security plans that are developed and elaborated for each United Nations and humanitarian operation. On the whole, the problem of clear coordination between international personnel deployed to zones of conflict is extremely important, especially since the number of actors in field operations is very large and includes not only United Nations personnel, but also the staff of other organizations, including non-governmental organizations.

We are convinced that after adopting today's useful presidential statement, the Security Council will in the future follow most attentively the question of the proper protection of United Nations personnel and will adequately respond to all instances in which the lives and health of these people are threatened.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to you, Mr. Foreign Minister, and by thanking you for presiding over this open debate on protection of United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel.

About a year ago, in an open meeting, we expressed our position on the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Since then we received the report of the Secretary-General, last September, and we thank him for the important elements outlined therein on that issue, which greatly facilitate our deliberations today. We welcome this opportunity to share our views on this subject.

In her opening statement, Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette articulated very effectively the areas which require the attention of the Council. We thank her also for identifying actions that urgently need to be taken to ensure the security of United Nations and other humanitarian personnel. Bangladesh welcomes her assertion that a full-time United Nations Security Coordinator will be appointed. Country-by-country security requirements to be undertaken by the Secretariat are a very helpful step. The idea of a training centre for all international staff, irrespective of their various mandates, is practical and should be pursued.

We thank World Food Programme Executive Director Catherine Bertini for her graphically pertinent statement and for highlighting the risks that humanitarian personnel run every day throughout the world.

Internal armed conflicts are on the rise. What concerns us most is the increasing tendency of the parties to a conflict of targeting non-combatants — civilians, including United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. These individuals put their lives at risk pursuing a noble mission, and my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to pay a great tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives and security in the service of humanity in distant parts of the world.

The existing international legal framework sets standards for parties to an armed conflict regarding the treatment of these protected persons. In spite of these standards, there is increasing violence against them, which calls for action by the international community aimed at promoting a culture of compliance and strengthening security arrangements to improve the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. We wish to focus on the following five issues related to this objective.

First, we have a clear responsibility to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in accordance with the provisions of international law and respective national laws as appropriate. While the primary responsibility to do so rests with the States hosting a United Nations or humanitarian mission, we urge that all care be taken by such personnel to preserve the impartial and international nature of these missions.

Secondly, we are convinced that these personnel play an irreplaceable role in conflict situations, and we feel that it is important for them to have access to

affected populations, in accordance with the relevant principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, we consider the inclusion of attacks intentionally directed against such personnel as a war crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court an important step towards addressing the issue of impunity on the part of the perpetrators of such violence. We fully support the call for bringing to justice those responsible for violence against protected personnel.

Fourthly, mandates for peacekeeping operations need to incorporate strengthened safety and security regimes while ensuring that those measures are in support of their main missions. In this regard, we look forward to a general and comprehensive review of security in peacekeeping operations and to the elaboration of specific measures aimed at increasing the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

Fifthly, we strongly support the proposal to develop a comprehensive security plan for the personnel of every peacekeeping and humanitarian mission. To this end, we consider it appropriate that specific and practical measures based on the provisions of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel be built into each status-of-forces and status-of-mission agreement. We also underline the imperative of responding in good time to conflict situations and of not allowing the capability to do so to be constrained in any way.

Before concluding, we want to welcome the entry into force of the 1994 Convention, which Bangladesh has already ratified. We encourage all States that have not done so to become party to the Convention at the earliest possible date. Twenty-nine States parties out of a membership of 188 is, obviously, not a good record.

In many issues confronting the United Nations and the international community, there is a gap between what is desirable and what is achievable. We strongly believe that in this case there is no other way but to take practical measures urgently to strengthen security arrangements and enhance their management to ensure the safety and security of United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for the conciseness of his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Allow me to express my delegation's deep satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. Minister, presiding over the Council today. We deeply appreciate the initiative taken by your country, Argentina, in convening this very timely and important debate on the protection of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, and to the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Ms. Catherine Bertini, for their sobering statements, in which they detailed the nature of the attacks on United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel and made recommendations for action that the Council should take.

Jamaica is deeply concerned by the continued attacks against United Nations and other humanitarian personnel, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms all acts of violence directed against them. We believe that the international community must move with the greatest urgency to curb these unacceptable acts and that it should spare no effort in adopting the most comprehensive approaches to resolving these gross violations of international law, recognizing — as Ms. Bertini pointed out — that attacks against United Nations and associated personnel are aimed at the United Nations itself. The extremely urgent nature of this situation requires us to urge full compliance with international law and to take appropriate steps to address the gaps in the legal coverage of humanitarian personnel that continue to exist despite the current legal regimes.

Today's debate gives us a unique opportunity to review the role to be played by the Security Council in supporting the work of humanitarian organizations and improving the environment for humanitarian assistance. In this regard, we must ensure that the mandates of the United Nations field operations include appropriate measures for the safety and protection of United Nations and associated personnel and other personnel.

The presence of military and peacekeeping personnel in a multifunctional operation may be one of the most effective ways of guaranteeing the minimum security necessary to conduct humanitarian operations. United Nations peacekeeping forces mandated to support humanitarian assistance missions have generally helped establish a more secure environment. We therefore believe that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations could assist in determining the most appropriate cases in which this approach may be applied.

Coordination and cooperation among the military, civilian, political and humanitarian components of a multifunctional operation are essential to the success of United Nations missions. As was emphasized earlier, we must restore respect for the neutral and impartial work they undertake. We also believe that proper training and sensitization of personnel to the relevant domestic laws, conditions and customs that they will encounter should become an integral part of their process of preparation.

An effective and comprehensive security plan for the humanitarian components of peacekeeping operations is essential for their success and for securing the safety of the personnel involved. The provision of adequate financial resources for the proper security training of United Nations personnel must therefore be treated as a matter of priority. In this regard, we acknowledge the importance of the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations personnel, and we recall the appeal made by the Deputy Secretary-General for more contributions to the Fund. We are also pleased to have learned from the Deputy Secretary-General that a full-time Security Coordinator will be appointed.

My delegation has taken special note of the entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and we recognize its importance in expanding the level of legal coverage for humanitarian workers. However, there still remain substantial weaknesses in legal coverage. The international community must therefore urgently devise appropriate legal instruments to address the concerns of those humanitarian organizations not associated with the United Nations. The United Nations must also address the need for legal coverage and protection of locally recruited United Nations staff, who often are the major targets of attack.

We would also suggest that a compilation of examples of best practices and lessons learned with regard to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel in the field should be conducted with the utmost urgency in order to provide useful guidance to new and ongoing humanitarian missions. We believe that the recommendations concerning the protection of humanitarian workers contained in the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict are important in addressing the problem, and we hope that the working group established to consider these recommendations will soon complete its mandate.

In an effort to strengthen the security of United Nations and associated personnel, we further believe that the inclusion of certain aspects of the 1994 Convention into status-of-forces agreements could be useful in enhancing the security environments in which these persons operate. We also believe that there is a need for greater cooperation between the humanitarian community, peacekeeping operations and Member States — particularly troop contributors — in exchanging information on risk assessment and on conditions in the field. The Secretariat should coordinate such exchanges on security issues. In this connection, we note the recommendations made by the Deputy Secretary-General and look forward to the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted later this year.

The protection of humanitarian workers cannot be fully achieved without effective deterrence of those who continue to violate the rights of individuals who enjoy protection under international law. As previous speakers have pointed out, the international community should not tolerate impunity. States must bring to justice those who have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law. We must put the full weight of the Council behind efforts to strengthen international legal enforcement mechanisms. We must continue to support the international criminal tribunals and to emphasize the responsibility of States and non-State actors alike for guaranteeing the safety of humanitarian personnel and for ensuring the unimpeded access of such personnel to civilians in situations of conflict.

The Security Council must also play an important role in ensuring the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers. We believe that any long-term protection requires an enhancement of the Council's role in addressing the root causes of conflict in a comprehensive manner. The lack of political will is one of the greatest crises facing the international community in resolving conflicts and the Council must therefore redouble its efforts to address the political aspects involved in the many situations which are giving rise to the current humanitarian crises.

In conclusion, I wish to join previous speakers in paying tribute to those staff of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations who have chosen to serve the international community in conflict situations, and to salute those who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace. The Council must act now. Their lives must not have been lost in vain.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to the Argentine delegation.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Welcome, Sir, to New York and to the Security Council. As others have said, it is a real pleasure to see you here today.

The safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, and of humanitarian personnel, are an issue of vital importance to the United Kingdom. We are a significant contributor of troops, military observers and civilian police to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Many more of our nationals serve as humanitarian staff in the field. Like other Council members, we owe a duty of care to those we deploy to do vitally important jobs in conditions which are all too often dangerous and unpleasant. The United Kingdom is one of the relatively few Member States that have ratified the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

Against this background, we should clearly continue to analyse all proposals for United Nations operations to ensure that these risks are kept to a minimum and, where they cannot be avoided, that United Nations personnel are given the means to ensure their own security.

We welcome the proposals and ideas set out in the Deputy Secretary-General's statement, not least her admonition on resources. In the case of our own foreign service, security for staff is regarded as one of the prerequisites for delivering our objectives and funded accordingly as a core activity.

I should also like to say how much I appreciated the eloquence of Ms. Bertini's contribution today.

We, absolutely rightly, have a very long speakers' list on this important subject. Thus, in the interests of brevity, I will not go beyond these rather general points today, but, like the representative of France, I would like to draw members' attention to the statement that the Permanent Representative of Portugal will be making on behalf of the European Union later in this debate, which the United Kingdom fully supports.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words of welcome addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I want to applaud the excellent and thought-provoking statements made by the Deputy Secretary-General and by Ms. Bertini. I also want to join in welcoming you, Sir, to New York and to the Council. I applaud your presence here today to address this important subject.

With the need for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations growing, the United States appreciates the focus Argentina brings this month to the protection of United Nations and associated personnel. Events in Kosovo, East Timor, Burundi, Sudan, Sierra Leone and all too many other places have illustrated the dangers to which these personnel are exposed. Nearly 100 United Nations staff have been murdered in recent years; another 80 have been killed in the line of duty. These disturbing numbers do not include the numerous humanitarian personnel working for non-governmental organizations who have been murdered, kidnapped, shot or otherwise harmed. We pay tribute to these unarmed civilians, who all too often are the targets of unprovoked attacks which must be condemned.

The Security Council's decision to again address this issue reinforces the seriousness of the matter. We hope it will also inspire all Governments and non-State actors to commit themselves to protecting those working for peace and humanitarian relief. As Ms. Bertini noted eloquently, the United Nations flag must not become a target rather than a shield.

As a community of nations, we share a moral and political obligation to take action to prevent the onset of violence and, when this fails, to mitigate conflict. We also share a responsibility to protect United Nations and associated personnel, humanitarian workers and members of multinational forces working for peace and stability. Under all circumstances, United Nations and associated personnel have a right to protect themselves. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon host States and other actors to create environments in which they can safely carry out their missions. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel rests with the authorities of the host Government, but we must also do our best to ensure that concrete steps are taken to protect those who serve and to punish those who violate their safety.

The Security Council, along with the Secretary-General and other concerned organs of the United Nations, must continue efforts to bolster security and to force protection for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The Secretariat should develop comprehensive security plans for all missions and we welcome the Deputy Secretary-General's comments today on the plans to enhance security. It is imperative that all concerned parties cooperate fully with the United Nations so as to facilitate the timely, effective and secure deployment of humanitarian and peacekeeping missions.

We further welcome the Security Council's decision to avail itself of all of the tools appropriate for protecting United Nations and associated and humanitarian personnel. For example, the United States supports sanctions targeted to deter and contain those who violate international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as those parties to conflicts who continually defy Security Council resolutions.

We look forward to continuing the important work that we are noting today and we thank Argentina for giving its attention to this very important subject.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his kind words concerning my presidency and country.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to join in the words of welcome and good wishes that have been expressed to you, Sir, and to convey to the delegation of Argentina our gratitude for its organization of today's meeting on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. I would also like to thank Ms. Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, and Ms. Bertini, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, for their substantial statements.

The past decade has been marked by a disturbing increase in conflicts, most often within States. These conflicts pit legitimate Governments against factions and movements led by rebel chiefs or warlords. In such situations, characterized by the collapse of political structures, humanitarian assistance operations are now frequent, and the humanitarian personnel find themselves increasingly exposed to grave risk as they carry out their mission.

If in the past United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel were victims of conflicts between belligerents, now these workers are being directly targeted by the parties. Mali forcefully condemns the harassment, arrest, illegal detention, abduction, hostage-taking, demands for ransom and deliberate attacks against buildings housing United Nations personnel. We believe such acts must be halted as soon as possible.

To this end the Security Council, in its presidential statement of 29 September 1998, issued as document S/PRST/1998/30, condemned attacks on or use of force against the personnel of the United Nations and of other humanitarian organizations taking part in United Nations operations, as well as against the personnel of humanitarian organizations, in violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

This major commitment of the Security Council should be strengthened. The international community, and the Member States of the United Nations in particular, should, in our view, take a firm stand against violations of international humanitarian law and impose sanctions on all those who are guilty of such violations. Further, it is first and foremost the responsibility of the States on whose territory such acts have been committed to arrest the guilty parties and bring them to justice.

The international community also should take a stand against the culture of impunity and should support all initiatives having this aim, in particular those clauses of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that define attacks against United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel as war crimes — and thus as crimes coming under the jurisdiction of the Court. We believe that the Rome Statute, which my country has signed and will soon ratify, will contribute to ensuring the security and protection of these workers. This is why we believe it important that this Statute quickly enter into force and that all States sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

My delegation is pleased that the presidential statement that the Council is going to adopt at the conclusion of this debate confirms that the Security Council is resolved to take energetic steps to assure and guarantee the security and safety of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in all conflict situations.

In conclusion I would like to state that Mali will before long take the necessary steps to ratify the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, of 9 December 1994.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mali for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I would like to extend my delegation's sincere appreciation to Argentina for taking the initiative in organizing this open meeting of the Council on the important question of the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. We are particularly pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over today's meeting.

We also wish to extend our deep appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her opening remarks, which have set the tone for this meeting and voiced the urgent need for action. We are equally appreciative of the invaluable and impassioned contribution by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme. We look forward to the statement from the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, many of whose personnel also operate in vulnerable environments.

Most of the conflicts that now come before the Council are internal armed conflicts. In many of them there have been frequent and flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law, in which civilians have increasingly become deliberate targets of combatants. In many, if not all, of these conflicts, the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel has become more difficult because of the very often blurred dividing line between combatants and noncombatants, and between peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel. There has been a disturbing increase in the number and scale of direct and calculated attacks against United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in the field. Malaysia condemns in the strongest terms the attacks on these personnel, who carry out their selfless missions under what are very often difficult circumstances and at great risk to themselves on behalf of the international community.

The two open debates held in the Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict — debates that culminated in resolution 1265 (1999) on this subject last year — have been important steps in highlighting the issue and the need for political will and action in the search for solutions to complement humanitarian efforts in complex conflict situations. The General Assembly, in adopting resolution 54/192 without a vote, clearly demonstrated its deep concern for the security and safety of humanitarian personnel and for the protection of United Nations personnel. In doing so it called on all Governments and parties in countries where these personnel are operating to take all possible measures to ensure that the lives and well-being of humanitarian personnel are respected and protected.

There are a number of legal instruments under which the security and safety of officials of the United Nations system are guaranteed. These include Articles 100 and 105 of the Charter, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, the United Nations Development Programme Standard Basic Assistance Agreements, and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Nevertheless, the security and safety of staff are still in peril in many areas of United Nations operations.

A major concern is that the response by the host Governments to various incidents affecting these personnel has often been tardy and inadequate. The Organization must insist that concerned Governments conduct thorough investigations into all incidents affecting the security of the Organization's personnel. My delegation considers it vital that those who incite and perpetrate acts against humanitarian personnel be held accountable both by Governments and by the international community. In this regard, we welcome the timely entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

In recognizing that the security and safety of these peacekeeping and humanitarian missions are of paramount importance, especially in highly volatile and extremely dangerous conflict areas, this Council has an obligation to ensure that United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel are able to carry out their missions in responding to the needs of civilians, who should have unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance. While proper training about the real situation and risks on the ground would better equip humanitarian personnel to handle risky situations in their mission areas, this does not absolve the combatants of their own obligations and responsibilities vis-à-vis humanitarian workers, who perform noble tasks in the name of humanity.

My delegation suggested on several occasions that it would be appropriate to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifices of these humanitarian workers in the same way that the Organization honours its peacekeepers. This would provide fitting recognition of humanitarian workers' selfless contributions and commitment to their vastly important humanitarian work, which, for the most part, is taken for granted.

It is an undeniable fact that the widespread availability and use of small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel landmines have had an adverse impact on the scope and level of the violence that affects not only civilian populations but also United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. Most of the death or injury inflicted upon these personnel is due to gunshot wounds and the effects of indiscriminate shelling and landmines.

We must redouble our efforts to curb illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and also vigorously support the global efforts towards the effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. The effects of anti-personnel landmines are particularly pernicious because they kill or maim not only combatants, but, more often, innocent civilians — mostly children and women — and military personnel years after the conflict has ended. My delegation therefore supports the imposition of arms embargoes in situations where civilians and protected persons are deliberately targeted by the parties to the conflict.

Given the nature and scope of the matter, there is general recognition of the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to handling humanitarian crises, bringing together political, humanitarian development and human rights actors within an agreed framework of action. Today's debate is testimony to this approach. Malaysia strongly supports efforts to strengthen the relevant United Nations organs. The Organization would also greatly benefit from closer cooperation and coordination beyond the United Nations system, to include regional organizations, bilateral actors, Governments and non-State actors, as well as civil society, including internationally recognized non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

My delegation acknowledges and appreciates the fact that the United Nations has taken a number of important and effective steps to enhance the security and safety of United Nations system personnel, in spite of severely limited resources. This has just been highlighted by the Deputy Secretary-General. Nevertheless, such efforts need to be intensified. We look forward to the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General which is expected to be issued by May of this year. We trust that this report will contain recommendations that would contribute substantially to enhancing, indeed ensuring, the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, and humanitarian personnel. We earnestly hope that these recommendations will receive the strong and unqualified support of the Council and the international community not only politically but also, and more importantly, in terms of the necessary resources.

In conclusion, my delegation gives its unqualified support to the presidential statement that will be adopted by the Council at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): At the outset, let me hail the men and women who, under the United Nations flag, continue today to serve in the field in a dedicated and selfless manner. Between 1992 and January of this year a total of 184 United Nations personnel were killed in the field. These are fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles and aunts who served the United Nations and who have made the supreme sacrifice for international peace and security. For their sake it is only befitting, therefore, that the Security Council re-examine on its part what is to be done to help ensure the safety of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel.

Let me thus add my voice to those of my colleagues who have spoken before me in expressing my delegation's appreciation to your delegation, Mr. President, for having arranged this meeting. Your personal participation in this meeting, Mr. Minister, is testimony to the seriousness your Government attaches to this very important issue. Our gratitude also goes to the Deputy Secretary-General and to the Executive Director of the World Food Programme for their statements. They presented us with comprehensive and up-to-date information on the status of the protection of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, and we are very grateful.

The subject the Council is considering today is undoubtedly one of the gravest concerns of and challenges to the Security Council as the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. In 1989, the men and women of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) were welcomed with open arms in Namibia. SWAPO, the liberation movement then, cooperated with the United Nations, and its military wing disarmed. There are lessons to be learned from there — lessons that will enhance the safety of United Nations personnel today.

Contrary to the 1980s, however, today we have a mushrooming of rebel movements on the African continent — rebel movements and other armed groups who are targeting United Nations personnel persistently. In the Angolan situation, for example, UNITA, under specific and strict instructions from Mr. Savimbi, shot down two United Nations chartered aircraft on 26 December 1998 and 7 January 1999, respectively, over the territory it controlled. In addition, a plane piloted by a Russian crew was shot down by UNITA, and the fate of its crew remains unknown. It is therefore important that a clear message be sent to the rebel movements in Africa and elsewhere that lawlessness will no longer be tolerated.

The international community should not only condemn these barbaric acts but should also make sure that those responsible are brought to justice. In this regard, Namibia welcomes the entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. We encourage Members of the United Nations to become parties to the Convention as soon as possible, with a view to ending the culture of impunity in which flagrant violations of human rights and humanitarian law continue to go unpunished.

Furthermore, it is important that, when United Nations observers are deployed, there is an adequate protection force, under an appropriate mandate. In addition, there is a need to explore meaningful ways of effectively disarming rebels and other armed groups. This needs to be further examined, as it is linked to the continuous illegal flow of arms into conflict situations.

One other important confidence-building measure which we in Namibia used during the transition in our country was the code of conduct to which all the parties adhered. The mechanism used then can be duplicated today. Every mission of the United Nations must thus build on another in terms of lessons learned.

Namibia fully agrees with the notion that primary responsibility for the security and protection of the United Nations personnel and humanitarian personnel rests with the host Government. It is clear that under Article 105 of the United Nations Charter and relevant agreements entered into between the United Nations and the host Government, the United Nations is entitled to enjoy such privileges and immunities that are necessary to the fulfilment of its aims and objectives. However, for the Governments to be able to fulfil their obligations, it is fitting that United Nations personnel and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel do observe and respect the national laws and avoid all acts which are incompatible with the nature of their duties.

We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/192 of 17 December 1999, which is expected to be submitted in May 2000, addressing the scope of legal protection under the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Permit me first, Sir, to welcome you warmly and to thank you for personally presiding over this very important Security Council debate. The Tunisian delegation expresses its appreciation to your friendly country for having proposed a debate on so important an item as the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones.

Tunisia has participated in peacekeeping operations and will continue to do so, despite the losses it has suffered. We share the concerns of the international community about hostile acts committed in certain conflict situations against United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. The general thrust of operations conducted by the United Nations or under its auspices must always be the same: to keep and consolidate the peace and to provide humanitarian assistance. But in recent years, the proliferation and diversity of United Nations operations and the involvement on the ground of actors and bodies other than the United Nations itself have to some degree affected that understanding of the role of the Organization as defined by the Charter.

In his 1999 report on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/54/154 and A/54/154/Add.1), the Secretary-General painted a clear picture of the situation of the United Nations personnel deployed in many regions. That picture includes murder, illegal arrest, detention, robbery and much more. That negative picture raises two questions: What is behind this situation? And how can we remedy it?

In our view, these violations and this lack of respect for humanitarian and other United Nations officials, staff and humanitarian personnel stem from a certain degree of misunderstanding, ignorance and even negligence, particularly in conflict zones, concerning the peaceful basis, impartiality and neutrality of these missions. Such questionable conduct towards any peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operation can be explained in part by a lack of information and awareness about the role of the United Nations and its objectives in any given operation. The United Nations as a whole must find ways to disseminate a culture of peace and to strengthen its own image as an organization of peace, pacific settlement and humanitarian assistance.

Tunisia is concerned about a situation where the distinctive flag of the United Nations and the protective insignia of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which represent impartial assistance, are providing less and less

protection for humanitarian personnel; this reflects their continued vulnerable status, especially in conflict situations.

As to how to remedy these problems of a lack of security, especially given the growing number of victims, the United Nations has responded in a most appropriate manner: through the adoption of the first legal instrument in this connection, the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Convention in fact identifies the personnel entitled to protection, the obligations of host countries in whose territory the United Nations operations are deployed, and intentional violations against United Nations personnel, including the appropriate penalties. But, like any legal text, the Convention is binding only on States parties, which limits the scope of its implementation.

That said, the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his 8 September 1999 report to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/1999/957), to broaden the applicability of the Convention to cover other categories of United Nations personnel, warrants careful consideration with a view to addressing all these concerns.

For these reasons, we believe that the next step should be the consideration of specific preventive measures. Here, my delegation hails the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen and improve the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel through training on security issues and through sensitivity training. We also welcome the other measures proposed by Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini, whom I thank for their excellent statements. I am particularly pleased by the appointment of a security coordinator.

In our view, it is time for the Security Council and the General Assembly, which are both principal organs of the United Nations, along with all Member States, to look seriously at problems related to the deployment of certain United Nations operations, specifically with respect to the safety and security of personnel. In our view, those deliberations should focus on the following five points.

The first is clear and precise definition of the mandate of peacekeeping operations, especially those that fall within the framework of humanitarian assistance. Secondly, account must be taken of the special characteristics of each United Nations operation in order to determine what risks it could involve. Those elements essentially depend on the facts of the conflict or crisis, which must be studied.

The third is strengthening cooperation among the various bodies operating in the field. The fourth is providing security training for United Nations personnel, and providing the resources needed for such training. And the fifth is respect for the fundamental principle of the consent of States in accepting the deployment of a peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operation.

I wish in conclusion to state our support for today's draft presidential statement and for the specific recommendations and measures that will make it possible in a practical way to ensure the protection, safety and security of United Nations personnel and associated personnel. We urge all States to cooperate to that end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Ukraine very much appreciates and supports Argentina's initiative in organizing today's open debate. Your presence in New York, Mr. Minister, attests to the importance that your friendly country attaches to the issue of the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. I wish also to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and Ms. Bertini of the World Food Programme for their thorough insights into current problems in this area and for their thoughtful suggestions.

My country is a staunch supporter of and an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping activities. For Ukraine, the issues of the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel are of top priority. Unfortunately, like all other troop contributors, my country has also experienced the bitterness of human losses among its peacekeeping personnel. Over the past seven years of Ukraine's participation in 15 United Nations operations and missions, 18 Ukrainian peacekeepers have laid down their lives. More than 50 servicemen have suffered wounds and disabilities. Therefore, today's debate has immediate practical significance for my country.

We have witnessed an interesting debate at this meeting. We have also heard a number of ideas about how to ensure and enhance the security and safety of those who, by the nature of their service, are called to discharge their duties under the most difficult and

dangerous conditions and in situations where they often face enormous challenges. I can add hardly anything new to what has already been said. My delegation is pleased that those ideas are largely reflected in the text of today's draft presidential statement and that the Council remains quite united in this respect.

I wish to thank Ms. Fréchette for providing us with detailed information as to what steps are currently being undertaken by the Secretariat in order to strengthen the security and safety of United Nations personnel in conflict zones. In this connection, I would like to briefly comment on some of the points that we consider particularly relevant and important in the context of today's debate.

The recent expansion of United Nations peacekeeping activities, in particular the launching of the United Nations operations in Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone and other areas, as well as recurring acts of violence — including the most recent ones mentioned in the statement of the Russian delegation — against United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel, render the issue of extending the scope of legal protection to all categories of such personnel timely and acute.

Seven years ago, in view of the increasing number of losses among United Nations and associated personnel, Ukraine, together with New Zealand, initiated the elaboration of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, which was finally adopted in 1994. Its entry into force last year represents significant progress in strengthening the regime of protection of people in the service of the United Nations operating in conflict zones under the mandate of the Security Council or General Assembly. We are satisfied that, in its draft presidential statement, the Council makes a number of references to that international instrument and encourages all States to become party to and respect fully their obligations under the Convention.

It is, however, clear that the Convention is far from adequate for ensuring the same level of protection to categories of United Nations and associated personnel engaged in operations other than those specifically authorized by the Security Council or the General Assembly, including locally recruited staff. In this regard, my delegation shares the view of the Deputy Secretary-General on the need to consider ways to extend the scope of legal protection for United Nations and associated personnel on the basis of the 1994 Convention. In this context, we wish to express our support for the elaboration and adoption of an additional protocol to the Convention. Let me once again join all those who upheld the idea of inviting the General Assembly to pursue this task as expeditiously as possible.

Sharing the concern expressed by the Deputy Secretary-General, I would also like to stress the importance of yet another aspect of enhancing the physical protection of United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel: the need to ensure respect by all parties in conflict zones for the rules of international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as for the neutral and impartial character of the work of such personnel. This requires the establishment and improvement, both nationally and internationally, of effective implementation and enforcement mechanisms which would provide solid guarantees against the impunity of those responsible for attacks and other acts of violence against United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel. It is indeed appalling that Governments continue to be unable or unwilling to assume their responsibilities in this regard and that only a few offenders have been convicted of these crimes since 1992. In this connection, we cannot but emphasize the important role that the International Criminal Court could play in performing the crucial function of bringing to justice those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law. In this context, I would like to recall that just a few weeks ago, on 20 January, Ukraine became a signatory of the Rome Statute.

It is worth mentioning that the need to reinforce the responsibility of host States for the physical security of United Nations and associated personnel is also addressed by the Council in its draft presidential statement, which, *inter alia*, underlines the importance of including in each status-of-forces or status-of-mission agreement specific and practical measures based on the provisions of the 1994 Convention.

Lastly, Ukraine looks forward to the completion by the Secretary-General of a general and comprehensive review of security in peacekeeping operations, which would lead to elaborating and undertaking further specific and practical measures to increase the safety and security of United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel. We hope that this work will bring tangible results and constitute serious progress in providing adequate protection for such personnel.

In conclusion, let me express my delegation's sincere hope that today's open debate will give fresh impetus to our common efforts aimed at strengthening the

protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. Ukraine remains committed to this noble goal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): My delegation, like those of France and the United Kingdom, endorses the statement that will be made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

The protection of United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel is a subject of high priority for the delegation of the Netherlands, and we are grateful to the Argentine presidency for having convened this open meeting on the subject. We owe it to your delegation's initiative, Sir, that this morning we had the benefit of hearing the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ms. Bertini, describe the enormous risks to which humanitarian workers are exposed. My delegation was touched by the warm words she devoted to Ms. Saskia van Meijenfeldt, who was shot, execution-style, in Burundi.

We agree with all speakers who have pointed out that atrocities of this nature will continue to occur as long as they can be committed with impunity. Accordingly, we reiterate our call that all such incidents must be properly investigated not only so that those responsible may be brought to justice, but also so that, within the United Nations system, maximum benefit may be drawn from lessons learned. We were struck by Ms. Bertini's description of the dilemma which arises when risks approach a threshold at which they become unacceptable, while, on the other hand, calling off the operation would mean that innocent civilians would die. We are acutely aware of this dilemma and of the phenomenon that, as a result of protracted exposure to danger, this threshold tends to creep upwards. In speaking of lessons learned, we particularly call on those concerned to focus on this problem. It is our impression that the threshold problem was a factor in Saskia van Meijenfeldt's death.

I would again like to refer to the statement to be made by the representative of Portugal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Argentine Republic.

In this, my first statement to a United Nations body as Foreign Minister of my country, I should like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for her presence here and for the important ideas contained in her statement, of which we have duly taken note.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of the Security Council, as well as to the Members of the Organization that are not currently members of the Security Council, for having participated in this meeting. Finally, I thank Ms. Catherine Bertini very much for her statement and her ideas. The concepts we have heard demonstrate the importance of the problem caused by attacks against personnel participating in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions.

My Government considers that these operations and missions are an essential tool for maintaining international peace and security and for post-conflict peace-building. This is why the Argentine Republic has actively participated in peacekeeping operations and at present is the eighth-largest contributor of troops. Argentine personnel are deployed in 10 of the 19 missions currently under way.

At this point, I wish to reaffirm my Government's commitment to the efforts of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, and I would also especially like to express our willingness to contribute, as far as possible, to the operations that this Council authorizes.

In addition, in the humanitarian field, Argentina has also promoted the creation of the "White Helmets", an initiative aimed at putting at the disposal of the Secretary-General reserve teams of trained national volunteers in order to provide immediate support for United Nations activities in emergency humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. From 1996 to 1999, 629 "White Helmets" were deployed in 58 missions in 27 countries. It is my Government's intention to continue contributing to the humanitarian efforts that this Organization carries out.

The increasing requests for international humanitarian assistance and the greater number of peacekeeping operations during the last decade have resulted in a greater presence of the Organization in various regions of the world. There are currently 14,600 troops, police and observers serving the international community in those zones, without counting personnel

doing only humanitarian work. The environment in which these activities are carried out is one of increasing risk. United Nations and associated personnel, as well as the personnel of other humanitarian agencies, are working under increasingly dangerous conditions, as is shown by the frequency of attacks and incidents involving the use of force.

When in 1998 the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, he indicated that in a six-year period 153 international and local United Nations staff members had lost their lives in the service of the Organization and that 43 others had been taken hostages. These attacks, far from being accidental, in many cases result precisely from the fact that they belong to, or are somehow associated with, the Organization. Increasing their safety will require a set of both practical and legal measures.

In this context, we believe that peacekeeping operations should have sufficiently financed, adequate and realistic mandates, and that they should be implemented in a timely, effective and impartial manner, ensuring that the protection and safety of personnel is an integral part of the planning and implementation of operations.

When even under those conditions incidents occur, then investigation of the facts must be immediate, and in the case of criminal attacks, we must ensure that those responsible are prosecuted and punished through the appropriate national or international machinery. The punishment of those responsible is essential not only to fight against impunity, but also to build a stable peace once conflict ends.

In this regard, it is a remarkable step forward that attacks against personnel, facilities, *matériel*, units or vehicles involved in a peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance mission have been included as a war crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Argentina wishes to emphasize its satisfaction with this measure, which is applicable both to international and domestic armed conflicts.

We must remember, however, that the International Criminal Court is no substitute for, but rather complements, domestic legal systems. States cannot ignore their own obligation to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of criminal acts; this responsibility is inescapable. In this context, the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, which specifically establishes that States parties must prosecute the perpetrators of crimes or, failing that, extradite them to a State that so requests, becomes extremely relevant.

Argentina is a party to this Convention, and we wish to express our satisfaction at its entry into force in January 1999. It would be desirable, nevertheless, to see the still limited number of ratifications grow, and today we have heard indications that there is progress in that direction. Yet despite its importance, the Convention is not applicable to all the individuals and organizations present in zones of conflict: it does not adequately cover locally recruited personnel in spite of their being a majority of the victims, and it does not sufficiently protect those who provide humanitarian assistance, especially in areas not included in a peacekeeping operation. These and other shortcomings of the Convention should be analysed in order to develop a better normative framework. In this regard, we wish to strongly support the appeal made by the Secretary-General, in his report of 8 September 1999 to the Security Council on the protection of civilians (S/1999/957), that the scope of application of the 1994 Convention be expanded through a protocol.

Those who work tirelessly, giving all their effort, their solidarity or their lives to alleviate the suffering of their fellow human beings, deserve our deepest appreciation, our gratitude and our commitment to do our utmost to defend them. These individuals set an example for all of us. By convening a debate on the issue of their safety, Argentina wishes to call attention not only to the serious risks that these people take voluntarily and selflessly, but also to the urgent need to ensure their full protection. Many have fallen; let this meeting be a sincere and profound tribute to them.

This concern of ours responds to a comprehensive philosophical and political vision, essentially focused on the value we give to the principles that protect the life and dignity of all human beings.

It is imperative that we do our utmost to adopt the practical and legal measures needed to enhance the protection of those who work to benefit humankind. Not only are the acts that affect them blows against the freedom and integrity of the individual, they can also jeopardize the attainment of the goals of peacekeeping operations and, even worse, the credibility of this Organization.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that despite the financial difficulties confronting our country, Argentina will make a contribution of $50,000 to the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations personnel established in 1998.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Vantsevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me first of all to welcome you, Mr. Minister, as you preside over this meeting of the Security Council. Belarus highly appreciates Argentina's initiative to hold this discussion on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. We are convinced that under your effective stewardship this meeting will be able to identify further steps that the United Nations and the entire international community must take in this important area.

The last report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization does not give reason for great optimism regarding a decrease in conflicts throughout the world in the foreseeable future. Despite all the efforts made by the United Nations, the Security Council and world community as a whole, wars continue to be today's most urgent and serious problem. In this connection, the United Nations is making additional efforts to step up its role in the area of peacekeeping. Every day, United Nations personnel are deployed to various regions of the world in noble peacekeeping missions. Ensuring their security is an extremely important task for the entire world community.

Over four years ago, Belarus became the thirty-fourth State to accede to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Convention incontrovertibly creates a viable legal basis for the protection of those who perform peacekeeping duties. The main task at this stage is to develop a reliable mechanism for its implementation. Belarus believes that a special role has to be played in this regard by the national parliaments of the States that have acceded to and ratified the Convention, as well as by the international community, which must focus its efforts on developing additional mechanisms to ensure the implementation of this international legal instrument.

The Security Council must play a special role in this regard. It is not enough merely to condemn acts of violence against United Nations and associated personnel. It is essential to foster the search for real steps that could be taken to punish those responsible and prevent such nefarious practices. We hope that today's discussion will enrich us with new ideas. In this connection, Belarus welcomes the relevant provisions included in the presidential statement to be adopted at the end of our meeting.

Last year was an unprecedented year for the United Nations from the standpoint of the involvement of its personnel in peacekeeping and peace-building. Yet the work of the first civilian administrations in history — in Kosovo and East Timor — and of the peacekeepers in Georgia and Burundi have proved to be directly related to the commission of acts of cruelty and violence against the personnel of those missions. Reports of casualties are becoming more frequent. This eloquently attests to the fact that the issue of personnel security should become a priority in all efforts to prepare and deploy missions. A mandatory part of that work should be the proper training of mission personnel.

The protection of United Nations personnel is directly connected with the problems associated with combating international terrorism. Belarus considers that last year's Security Council meeting on this issue, which was convened on the initiative of the Russian Federation, laid the groundwork for improving the response of the United Nations and the Security Council to terrorist activities, whose victims are not only local populations, but also United Nations personnel. We believe that such a systematic approach should be continued. What is paramount is the inadmissibility of the view that it is impossible to eradicate the causes of lawlessness and that there can therefore be no targeted strategy to counter it.

At this meeting, we must pay tribute to those who have fallen in the performance of their lofty humanitarian duties: the United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian workers who gave their lives to save the lives of others and to restore peace and stability in the hot spots of our planet.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Belarus for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Singapore. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on your decision to convene a discussion on this subject. The subject is timely. We are once again on the verge of significantly increasing the deployment of United Nations and associated personnel, and once again in more difficult situations. All these decisions to deploy will be made by the United Nations Security Council and not by any other body. Hence, the Council has to bear primary responsibility for the safety and well-being — indeed, the lives — of the United Nations personnel that it will be deploying in the field.

The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel was adopted in 1994 by the General Assembly. By then, more than 1,000 United Nations peacekeepers had already been killed in the line of duty since 1948. Despite the entry into force of the Convention, the attacks on United Nations and associated personnel have continued unabated, resulting in the loss of many more lives. United Nations and associated personnel have also frequently been the targets of kidnappings, detentions, assaults and harassment.

Some familiar examples of late include the downing of two United Nations-chartered aircraft over Angola in December 1998 and January 1999, in which 23 people working for or with the United Nations lost their lives; the brutal killing of Luis Zúñiga and Saskia von Meijenfeldt in a road ambush in Burundi in October last year; and the detention of an official of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for about 11 months in 1998 by armed elements in a republic of the Russian Federation. In August 1999, a group of United Nations military observers, civilian personnel and peacekeepers of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) were held hostage by rebels for about a week in Sierra Leone. Last year, United Nations personnel in East Timor were threatened and harassed. We should also not forget the dramatic scenes of Dutch peacekeepers being captured, handcuffed and held hostage by Serbian units. Even as we speak today, we have also been told that the whereabouts of some 50 United Nations staffers around the world are still unknown.

This is totally unacceptable. United Nations and associated personnel who serve as peacekeepers and who render humanitarian assistance in dangerous missions in various conflict zones fulfil a crucial duty on behalf of the international community. They put their lives at risk in order that others may live and that peace may be maintained. In return, the international community, acting as a whole, has a vital obligation to ensure that these people be adequately protected. The Security Council bears the main burden of this obligation.

Slowly but steadily, we are moving towards a more civilized world order. Various conventions, formal and informal, have been created to protect innocent persons in conflicts. As we do this, the international norms for the protection of United Nations and associated personnel, as well as humanitarian personnel, should move in tandem. We should insist on the full and effective implementation of the relevant principles and rules of international humanitarian law related to the safety and security of such personnel. We should also make every effort to continually strengthen the international rule of law for the protection of United Nations and associated personnel in conflict zones. We must bear in mind — as you have mentioned, Sir — that some of those lives being put at risk are volunteers, such as the White Helmets.

To achieve such security for United Nations and associated personnel, all those responsible for harming them should be fully punished. In a statement made on 14 October 1999, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Fréchette, told United Nations Member States to bear primary responsibility for ensuring the security of United Nations staff and mentioned some concrete measures that Member States can take:

> "First, they can conduct vigorous investigations into all such killings and incidents, prosecuting those responsible to the full extent of the law. To our knowledge, only one person has ever been found guilty and has been imprisoned for killing or causing the death of a United Nations staff member. This impunity cannot be allowed to stand." (*A/54/PV.34, p. 3*)

To protect United Nations, associated and humanitarian personnel, it is clear that each of us — the Security Council, the Secretariat and its agencies and we, the States Members of the United Nations — will have to bear some responsibility. Unless we all work together, we will not solve the problem.

Primary responsibility, as we said earlier, lies with the Security Council. Before launching any operation, it must factor in the safety and security of the personnel involved. Some risks are inevitable, but the risks should be carefully weighed and assessed. It is also the responsibility of the Security Council to ensure that there

be a match between the mandate and the resources approved for each and every mission. From the beginning to the end of each operation, the Security Council must monitor the safety of the operation.

Equally important, the Security Council must be accountable if any operation goes wrong. Symbolically, it was only appropriate that the Security Council despatched a mission, comprising five permanent representatives and ably led by Ambassador Martin Andjaba, when the situation in East Timor deteriorated. At that stage, the staff and occupants of the United Nations compound in Dili were also being threatened by rogue militia. The Security Council should analyse what went wrong and why. Accountability is an essential aspect of leadership. The Security Council should accept this.

Similarly, the Secretariat should ensure that safety and security are fully taken into account when United Nations operations are planned and launched. The development of a comprehensive security plan for a peacekeeping and/or humanitarian operation is essential before any such operation commences. The plan should also cover contingencies. Without a comprehensive security plan, we may see a repeat of the unfortunate episodes we have witnessed.

Finally, the Member States have an equally important role to play. Our words and deeds create the overall political climate in which United Nations missions operate. All those who withhold their regular funding to the United Nations should realize that their actions have real consequences — they endanger the lives of men and women in the field. At the same time, to prove their commitment to ensuring the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, all United Nations States should accede to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Singapore was the fifth country to accede to the Convention in 1996. So far, only 29 States have ratified or acceded to it. Clearly, more need to do so. We hope that this discussion today will trigger more into action.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Singapore for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for personally presiding over this meeting to consider ways and means of enhancing the security of those personnel who are working in conflict zones. The importance of this issue cannot be overemphasized, as the safety of personnel is a precondition for the success of every United Nations political and humanitarian operation.

Although the need to improve the safety of United Nations personnel working in the field has been discussed at length in this Council before and in other forums of the United Nations, it is very clear that more needs to be done. As the number of those killed and who have suffered in the line of duty continues to increase, there is no clear sign of improvement in the security situation surrounding those personnel. It is imperative, therefore, that we mobilize our collective political will and start taking concrete and practical steps to protect those personnel and prevent further casualties.

First and foremost, what can the Security Council do to improve the safety of personnel? The Security Council, as the principal organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, should attach higher priority in its work to the safety of personnel in the field. We expect the Council to continue to monitor closely the situation in the field and, if necessary, to adopt specific measures to protect personnel in conflict zones and take a public stand against those who endanger the lives of such personnel. The strong and consistent interest of the Security Council in the safety of personnel engaged in United Nations operations under dangerous circumstances will demonstrate that the international community will not tolerate a culture of impunity and will hold responsible the organizations and individuals who violate the safety of personnel.

While a wide range of specific measures are called for, today I would like to focus my comments on two areas where I believe further efforts are especially needed. The first area is the international legal framework.

In January 1999 we finally welcomed the entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The fact that, as previous speakers have noted, only 29 countries have thus far ratified this Convention is a source of great disappointment to my delegation. Moreover, these 29 countries do not include a single country in which United Nations peacekeeping forces are deployed. As the second

country to have ratified this Convention, Japan would like to call upon those States that have not yet done so to become parties to it as soon as possible. It is especially important that all members of the Security Council do so; so far only four have. By ratifying the Convention, Security Council members would be setting an example for the rest of the membership of the Organization.

In this regard, I hope that the Security Council will urge those Member States hosting United Nations operations in their own territories to sign and ratify the Convention, thereby — along with welcoming and receiving United Nations operations in their own territories — clearly demonstrating their political and legal commitment to uphold their responsibility of protecting the safety of United Nations and associated personnel who are working in their area.

In addition, as regards the legal framework, it is also necessary to extend the scope of the Convention to include United Nations and associated personnel who are not yet under its umbrella. Japan heartily supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General, contained in his report of 8 September 1999, calling upon the Security Council to

> "Invite the General Assembly to urgently pursue the development of a protocol to the 1994 Convention, which would extend the scope of legal protection to all United Nations and associated personnel." *(S/1999/957, recommendation 11)*

To this end, we welcome the General Assembly resolution on this question, resolution 54/192 of 17 December 1999.

At the same time, while awaiting the protocol to the 1994 Convention, it should be recalled that the Convention itself contains a provision that the Security Council may extend the scope of legal protection on a case-by-case basis. Perhaps the Security Council might utilize this mechanism.

Another important area is the need for concrete and practical steps to enhance safety. Training in safety and security is of paramount importance. Since the end of 1998, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator has organized a series of training missions and workshops in many regions of the world, including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kenya, and we understand that additional workshops are scheduled to take place this year, all financed from the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations personnel.

We have been gratified to learn that quite a few staff members have credited the lessons they received in those workshops with saving their lives. The workshops are very important. I would therefore like to express Japan's appreciation to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator for its dedicated efforts in carrying out those training activities.

The need for security training is growing, and the Trust Fund requires continued support. We find it deeply distressing that to date only five Member States, including Japan, have contributed to this Trust Fund. My delegation would like to invite the entire membership of the United Nations to support the Trust Fund.

As a way of encouraging a more positive response from Member States, it might be worthwhile for the Secretariat to organize regular briefings to apprise them of concrete measures that have been taken so far and to discuss with them possible additional measures and support. In this connection, we hope that the general and comprehensive review of security requirements for peacekeepers, which has been planned by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, will be completed as soon as possible. A working group or a seminar on the safety and security of United Nations personnel, with the participation of Member States, which the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations proposed last year, would serve as a useful forum to facilitate this review. Japan is ready to extend its support for such a meeting.

In closing, let me emphasize that all of us gathered here today must recommit ourselves to translating words into concrete actions for the improved security of the dedicated men and women who are working for the cause of global peace.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for us to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council. I believe that you could not have chosen a better topic for this open debate under the Argentine presidency. The decision to tackle today's topic reflects Argentina's traditional commitment in the humanitarian field and demonstrates the generous concern of the Argentine people for international issues.

Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the number of attacks or uses of force against United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel. The sense of urgency in our discussion today cannot be denied. As the Secretary-General has recently stated, the presumption that the United Nations flag guarantees protection is no longer universally valid. The same reasoning applies to other organizations with a long history of impartial work in the humanitarian field, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

It is not necessary to repeat examples of deeds that are widely known. What we need is not a precise diagnosis of the problem; we need appropriate remedies.

The context in which humanitarian emergencies occur has changed. On 21 January 1999, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, described to the Council what the new context signifies. He said,

> "Today's warfare often takes place in cities and villages, with civilians as the preferred targets, the propagation of terror as the premeditated tactic and the physical elimination or mass displacement of certain categories of populations as the overarching strategy." *(S/PV.3968, p. 2)*

The supplies used in humanitarian assistance are seen as useful assets and are often seized by belligerents for strategic purposes. Similarly, humanitarian workers are often seen as potential enemies, insofar as their attempt to provide relief for those in need is wrongly interpreted as a way of favouring one of the parties to the conflict.

What we are confronted with here, in fact, are grave violations of human rights, of humanitarian law and of the rights of refugees in the face of scorched-earth policies and deliberate violence against civilians. It is urgent that we undertake every effort, on a priority basis, to improve the security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel.

This is not an abstract discussion. Let their be no doubt about our challenge: we must take concrete measures to protect the lives of those whose security is threatened and abused merely because they seek to relieve the suffering of desperate people.

Concrete and specific suggestions have been put forward during this debate. I wish to emphasize the importance of the statements of our Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, and of Ms. Bertini, of the World Food Programme. The Brazilian delegation has no further suggestions, but we believe that we must underscore a few points.

First, the preparation for United Nations operations and humanitarian operations must include, whenever appropriate, a significant security component, because respect for the flags of the United Nations and of the International Committee of the Red Cross cannot always be guaranteed.

Secondly, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator must be strengthened. It is also important to spare no effort in training humanitarian personnel in security matters.

Thirdly, in order to preserve credibility and trust in areas devastated by conflict, it is imperative to maintain the clear distinction between military activities and humanitarian activities. Troops certainly can support humanitarian efforts, but they cannot serve to replace agencies having a humanitarian mandate.

Fourthly, the instruments of the Security Council should be used to always guarantee secure, unhindered access for humanitarian workers to those in need. In this context, the precarious security situation of humanitarian and United Nations personnel in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo poses an immediate challenge.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the champions of our cause, the women and men who risk their lives in volatile regions of the world to give hope to those without it. Humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel in the field unselfishly are writing one of the most poignant pages of our contemporary history. They deserve our recognition and respect. These are the true heros of our times. The best way of paying tribute to them is through concrete measures so that today's hero does not become tomorrow's martyr.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in extending my delegation's appreciation to Foreign Minister Rodríguez Giavarini for presiding over today's open debate. We are also highly appreciative of Argentina's initiative of taking up once again this important and urgent question before the Council, drawing upon the Council's previous discussions and actions on the issue. Our thanks also go to Ms. Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General, and Ms. Bertini for their very important introductory statements.

We note with a sense of satisfaction that, since my delegation first introduced this urgent issue to the Security Council during our presidency in May 1997, the Council has taken a series of important follow-up measures. It adopted resolution 1265 (1999) in September 1999 and a number of presidential statements on this subject. I would like to reiterate my Government's conviction that the Council should continue to take the lead in dealing with this urgent issue. My delegation therefore welcomes this open debate and the subsequent adoption of a presidential statement as another step in the right direction.

Having said that, let me make brief comments on some issues to which my delegation attaches importance. First, we are of the view that the Security Council should continue to forge ahead with international efforts to break the culture of impunity by bringing to justice those who attack United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in situations of conflict. The Council has already set a good precedent in this regard by establishing the two ad hoc Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report (S/1999/957) that, in cases of non-compliance, the Security Council could consider taking enforcement measures to facilitate the arrest and surrender of those accused by the two Tribunals. In this connection, we also hope that the statute of the International Criminal Court will enter into force as soon as possible.

Secondly, we fully agree that national Governments and the parties to conflict should bear primary responsibility for guaranteeing the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. We echo the suggestions made by Ms. Fréchette and Ms. Bertini this morning that serious efforts should be made to strengthen thorough investigations of and strict law enforcement against the violators of international humanitarian norms at both the national and international levels. Specific measures should be taken to hold transgressing parties and their leaders liable, both physically and financially, to their victims, under international law.

Thirdly, we welcome General Assembly resolution 54/192, adopted last December, on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel, which sets out the guiding principles for enhancing their protection. In this resolution the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report by May 2000 containing detailed analysis and recommendations addressing the scope of legal protection under the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. We look forward to this report so that an appropriate mechanism may be explored for extending the coverage of legal protection in conflict situations.

Last but not least, my delegation shares the view expressed by previous speakers that when the Security Council takes a decision on peacekeeping operations in support of humanitarian operations, the Council should provide them with a clear mandate to protect United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, together with sufficient resources to implement the mandate. Clear rules of engagement are also required. The United Nations has learned painful yet instructive lessons from its past experiences in dealing with the situations in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, which are applicable to current and future peacekeeping operations. In this regard, we support resolution 1289 (2000) on Sierra Leone, adopted two days ago, in which the Council underlined the importance of the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel.

As the involvement of the United Nations has steadily grown in recent years in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in conflict zones, the international community has an enormous obligation to rise to the daunting challenge of providing adequate safety and security to United Nations and associated personnel, and to humanitarian personnel involved in these operations.

We welcome today's open debate as an opportunity to once again draw the urgent attention of the international community to this desperately serious and pressing issue. What we need now is not words, but actions. We sincerely hope that more concrete and action-oriented recommendations will emerge and be tenaciously pursued in close collaboration with other United Nations

organs and agencies, with the full support of the entire United Nations membership. Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate my Government's strong commitment to the cause of protecting United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict situations, and I assure you, Mr. President, that the Republic of Korea will continue to be actively involved in these common efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I pay tribute on behalf of Egypt to the personnel in the field who are at work under the United Nations flag and to those providing humanitarian assistance. They embody the loftiest and noblest ideals of duty and sacrifice in the name of helping those in need in many regions and many States that have been the sites of man-made or natural disasters. I hail those who have given their lives in the service of peace and while providing assistance and humanitarian relief all over the world. They embody the goodwill of the international community; they are indispensable if the United Nations is to play its very important role in today's world.

My delegation has closely followed the deliberations on this issue, and ever year has been a proactive participant in the General Assembly's work on it. We believe that the Security Council's discussion today can help foster a better understanding of this issue in all its aspects. At the same time, we stress the importance of the division of labour and of respecting the individual competencies of the main bodies working in this field and those engaged in follow-up within the United Nations.

Here, we applaud you, Mr. President, for proposing today's debate on this important item.

Egypt fully supports the international community's call for a decisive stance in confronting threats and acts of violence, including hostage-taking and murder of United Nations personnel. Such acts are crimes punishable under international law. Indeed, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court includes such acts as war crimes falling within the competence of the Court. That is a positive step towards giving such personnel the protection they need and towards deterring anyone who might be thinking of committing crimes of this kind.

Egypt calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to respect the rights of United Nations and other personnel working to provide humanitarian assistance, and to safeguard their safety and security. At the same time, Egypt calls upon such personnel, as they perform their duties, to respect the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the laws, rules, customs and traditions of the host countries, as well as the guiding principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991. Egypt calls for full access to civilians — men, women and children alike — who need help in any State. Such access should be gained through the proper legal channels: by humanitarian assistance agencies, with prior approval from the host countries; this would thus respect their national sovereignty. The principle is that the host State should play the principal role in initiating, organizing and coordinating any operation of this kind on its territory. This would avert or minimize any risks that humanitarian personnel might face. Egypt has always stressed that any humanitarian assistance operation should be committed to take no action that could expose the unity, territorial integrity or security of the host State to danger of any kind.

We are fully cognizant of the problems that arise in places that for one reason or another lack a central Government that is able genuinely to enforce law and order on its territory, and we call upon the General Assembly and the Security Council to play their proper roles in identifying the measures that the United Nations should take in such cases. This should be done in a transparent manner and with the participation of all countries, large and small, on an equal footing.

Egypt wants due attention to be paid to achieving the highest level of coordination among all bodies working in this sphere, whether within the United Nations system or between the United Nations and other relevant actors, first and foremost the International Committee of the Red Cross. I wish also to stress the importance of providing adequate financial resources for the provision of humanitarian assistance commensurate with the huge humanitarian challenges facing us today. Resources ought also to be provided for security training for United Nations personnel, as this will help the relevant bodies shoulder their humanitarian responsibilities in the best possible way.

I therefore take this opportunity to appeal to donor countries and organizations to increase their contributions to meet these needs and to fulfil the urgent requirements of humanitarian organizations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish, Mr. Minister, to welcome you and to thank you for presiding over this important meeting. My delegation and I myself are grateful for Argentina's initiative in convening this timely meeting, which is graced by your presence in the Chamber.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The protection of personnel, whether United Nations, associated or humanitarian personnel, is now a fundamental responsibility for United Nations missions in situations of conflict. The safety and security of these personnel have always been of paramount importance, but the worrying increase in attacks against United Nations and other personnel makes this an issue of the utmost concern and requires a firm response from the international community. Violence directed at international and local personnel working to bring peace and humanitarian relief to areas of conflict is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated in any circumstances. The efforts being undertaken by individuals in situations of extreme danger on behalf of the international community must be recognized. Their impartiality must be honoured and their safety guaranteed. The blue flag of the United Nations must be respected. Without safety and security, missions and operations cannot function, let alone succeed.

The increase in violent attacks has been registered while conflicts themselves increasingly involve civilian populations, which require greater levels of humanitarian assistance. But it is also true — and this is of great concern — that there is a growing lack of respect for international humanitarian and refugee law and for human rights.

Responsibility for the safety of personnel on the ground falls, in the first instance, to the Governments hosting peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. We urge all parties to conflicts to take all steps necessary to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, including locally recruited personnel.

The European Union stresses the importance of the implementation of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and urges those Member States that have not yet signed and ratified this Convention to do so as soon as possible. Serious consideration should be given to expanding the scope of the Convention to include locally recruited personnel, who are essential to the functioning of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

The perpetrators of crimes and violence against United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel must be brought to justice. Under-Secretary-General Vieira de Mello informed the Council last year that over 90 per cent of the deaths of humanitarian personnel have not yet been investigated by the relevant authorities. This situation is intolerable and cannot continue. Governments must act forcefully to prevent violence against these personnel and to punish those responsible for attacks and other violations of international humanitarian law.

In this context, the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is also essential, and we urge all Member States to sign and ratify the Statute as a matter of priority. The European Union remains committed to an early entry into force of the ICC Statute. The inclusion in the Statute of the war crime of intentionally attacking, in violation of international humanitarian law, personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission will help to bring perpetrators to justice.

The European Union believes that the safety and security of personnel begin with adequate planning by the United Nations and with giving missions and operations the necessary training and resources, including protection elements, to achieve realistic mandates in safety and with security. For its part, the Secretariat must ensure that United Nations and associated personnel are adequately protected, and we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. Important in this context is the draft resolution that the European Union sponsors every year in the General Assembly on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel. We look forward to the general and comprehensive review of security in peacekeeping operations currently under way.

The European Union stresses the importance of each peacekeeping operation having a comprehensive security plan, including standard operating procedures and a risk assessment for force commanders. The European Union supports the measures already highlighted and implemented where possible, including the deployment of the appropriate number of security officers, pre-deployment training for security officers and other staff and the provision of the necessary logistical support. The European Union also supports the Secretary-General's continued strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator with personnel dedicated to security in peacekeeping operations and looks forward to the appointment of a full-time security coordinator, as requested by the General Assembly for the security of humanitarian missions.

The complete review of air safety as it pertains to peacekeeping is also most welcome. Careful and comprehensive training of personnel, including humanitarian personnel, is also crucial in this regard. We look forward to the Secretary-General's forthcoming comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

The protection of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel is, as I said, of the utmost concern to us all. The Security Council has made clear its preoccupation with this problem, and the European Union fully supports the measures the Council may take to enhance the safety and security of personnel in situations of conflict. With its clear condemnation and intolerance of attacks on international personnel, the Council should also consider how best to enable peacekeeping operations to protect their personnel, those associated with them and those of humanitarian missions.

The European Union pays tribute to those who have given their lives in the service of peace and is committed to bringing a safer environment to the work of United Nations and associated personnel and humanitarian personnel.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are still several speakers on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the consent of the members of the Council, I will suspend the meeting until 3.30 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.